

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
July 30, 2008; 4:30 p.m.  
Council Chambers**

**PRESENT**

Akua B. Agyei  
Trena Carter  
Ian Kohen  
Gil Palmer  
Rosalind Pegram  
John Roberts  
John Stroh  
Pam Vincent  
Shiva Rallapalli

**ABSENT**

Greg Lewis  
Tony McClendon  
Jason Staley

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Director Arlette Tinsley, and Secretary, Lula Young.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Commissioner Roberts called roll. He advised June minutes were unofficial due to the lack of a quorum. He then requested any corrections or amendments to the May 28, 2008 minutes.

**Commissioner Carter moved to accept the May 28, 2008 minutes. Commissioner Kohen seconded. Motion carried.**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Commissioner Agyei reported a June ending balance of \$7,069.95 for the Donations account. With one contribution to Chaley Jackson of \$250.00 leaving the July balance of the Donations account at \$6,819.95.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Director Tinsley reported a successful mediation to Commissioners involving a National Origin in public accommodations complaint filed against a local healthcare provider. Director Tinsley advised Commissioners that a Certified Federal Interpreter, Maria Elena Walls, who does not have any official affiliation with Su Casa, was contracted to provide interpretation services as the Respondent's business manager/husband had made allegations that the Complainant was being shown some favoritism by our office as a Su Casa client. Director Tinsley advised that the mediation was a lengthy one with the Complainant desiring mandatory training for the Respondent and all staff members. Retired Commissioner, Merlyn Bartlett, agreed to serve as the mediator and had knowledge of the Cultural Competency Training for Healthcare Professionals where the Respondent and staff could receive the training online through the Dept. of Health & Human Services. Mr. Bartlett successfully mediated the mandatory training for all staff members with a gift certificate for the complainant. Discussion ensued.

Director Tinsley continued her report and advised Commissioners of the current budget issues, potential cuts and required reductions in the office operation appropriations. Commissioners were

informed of the potential for additional cuts to both the operational and staffing budgets. Commissioner questions and discussion ensued.

Director Tinsley informed Commissioners of staff continuing to have flood-related intakes. The Director stated the initial intakes typically involved employee's believing they had been treated differently than others suffering flood-related issues. The general intake increase also involved landlord/tenant disputes and reports of landlords who, after the flood, doubled the amount of rent previously charged for the same unit before the flood.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS – Financial Report on 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Dinner:**

Secretary Lula Young provided the financial wrap up report for the 2008 Annual Dinner. She reported current revenue from the 2008 Annual Dinner as \$1,664.35. Director Tinsley informed Commissioners that without the support of the Mayor, the revenue would have been approximately \$500.00. In response to Volunteer Rallapalli's inquiry about present budget issues improving or continuing into the next year. Commissioners and staff assessed a continuation of the budget constraints into 2009.

The Director and Commissioners continued their discussion on budget issues and the impact of the reduced financial support from the mayor on the Commission's annual dinner. Further discussion included community contribution requests and establishing a firm guide for staff to follow when a request for funding is received from a community member. Discussion ensued.

#### **OPEN FORUM:**

Commissioner Palmer asked if commissioners were aware of The Long Term Disaster Recovery Team (LTDR or LTR) that is being chaired by Doug Otto. He advised Commissioners that the Committee is looking for more volunteers. Director Tinsley advised that there is still an opportunity to participate on the sub-committees. Commissioner Palmer advised that he would have a list identifying the sub-committees distributed to Commissioners.

#### **OPEN FORUM:**

Commissioner Vincent shared a recent opportunity she unexpectedly received to pursue a personal goal within the community to help establish a drug court. She advised fellow Commissioners that during a recent contact with Pamela Clark. She learned that Ms. Clark shared her goals to establish a local drug court, juvenile division. Commissioner Vincent was advised by Ms. Clark that many in the legal system and community strongly believe a drug court is needed and that if she would work on getting both an adult and juvenile drug court established, she would have ample support.

Director Tinsley provided clarification that recovering drug and alcohol addicts are considered to have a disability under the ADA and that making sure the criminal justice system works with people with disabilities is considered a civil right. She went on to remind Commissioners that they had never taken an official position on the issue of supporting the creation of a drug court and that a Commissioner could only represent themselves as a community volunteer unless and until Commissioners passed a resolution to support that endeavor. Director Tinsley reminded Commissioners that for purposes of official statements to the press or on the record, the Commissioners have passed a policy that the Director of the Commission and the Chair of the Commission solely speak for the Commission. All Commissioners of course retain their first amendment right to speak on their own behalf. Commissioner Vincent agreed that this is a personal effort she is undertaking. Director Tinsley reminded Commissioners that they are free to pursue their own interests, and gave as an example former Commissioner Madhu Vedak, who successfully established an Interfaith Alliance. Discussion ensued.

### **OPEN FORUM:**

Commissioner Carter advised she had recently received an inquiry about all flood victims receiving equal funding from FEMA or other assistance. Director Tinsley advised that undocumented immigrants will not receive any federal funds. The only assistance available would be local charities and churches.

**Commissioner Roberts moved to table agenda items 9 through 11. Commissioner Carter seconded. Motion carried.**

### **LIAISON UPDATE – MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE:**

Commissioner Agyei reported that the CAEA is considering changing their name to C.A.M.E.O. Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization. She advised that when pushed, the main difference between C.A.M.E.O. and the Multicultural awareness committee is that C.A.M.E.O. is funded. Discussion ensued covering such topics as the Ethnic Expo and Diversity Roundtables.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Commissioner Roberts announced an event that Ivy Tech in conjunction with I.U.P.U.C., will be sponsoring the 2000 Limited Trust Library & Exhibition. The art and literary works will be available for use at Columbus Learning Center until December 20<sup>th</sup>. He advised that the information will be distributed to educators to share with their students. An opening gala will be at the Columbus Learning Center from 5-8pm on Thursday, September 18, 2008.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**Commissioner Carter moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Roberts seconded. Meeting adjourned.**